

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:**  
**BACHELOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish a new Bachelor of Arts Program in Social Justice in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed program will provide students with a realistic perspective on important social issues by integrating theory and classroom work with "real world" field experiences and internship opportunities. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priority to "ensure access to education and student success."

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of proposed program.** The proposed program is an interdisciplinary program that will help students explore, discover, and create practical solutions to real issues related to economics, health care, human rights, civil rights, and the environment. It will be located in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) because it is one of the leaders on campus for creating opportunities for real-world experience tied to classroom experience. The proposed program will require a minimum of 120 semester hours, including 39 semester hours of work in the major. Students will explore the intersections of race, class, gender, culture, economics, history, nationality, and human rights. They will approach social justice through the arts, history, literature, comparative religious studies, political science, philosophy, health education, and gender, women's, and sexuality studies. The course work from different academic departments and faculty will provide students a balanced approach to understanding the viewpoints of others, and help students to develop a practical set of skills related to decision-making, communication, leadership, and collaboration.

Students will take 15 credit hours in five required Foundation courses, six credit hours in the History and Social Movement requirement, and three credit hours in the Human Rights, Diversity, and Ethics requirement. Student will choose one of the following emphasis areas:

- ⇒ International History, Theory and Action
- ⇒ Human Rights
- ⇒ Health
- ⇒ Issues in Gender and Women's Studies
- ⇒ Politics and Social Justice
- ⇒ Ethnic and Cultural Studies in the United States
- ⇒ Environmental Issues

A capstone experience will be required; students may choose from the following options – senior project; experiential learning activity/essay; or internship/written component.

- ◇ Academic objectives. The proposed program is designed to provide field experiences that connect knowledge and theory to practice, build communication skills, promote collaboration and teamwork, develop digital literacy skills, and give students a broad understanding of how ethics, philosophy, human rights, and history intersect with power, diversity, and broad social issues in the fields of health care, environmental studies, human rights, ethnic and cultural studies, political science, and gender and women's studies.

The following student outcomes have been identified:

- ⇒ Explore through coursework and fieldwork how the intersections of geography, race, class, gender, sexuality, health, economics, and history create networks of privilege and oppression across the globe.
  - ⇒ Read, write, listen, and act through coursework and fieldwork to understand how conditions are created for change on the local, regional, and national levels historically, ethically, politically, and personally.
  - ⇒ Learn about the selected history of social movements, how those movements emerged, and the impacts those movements had on policy, populations, the environment, and culture through engagement in a core course.
  - ⇒ Develop a deeper understanding of issues, practice, research, and theory related to social justice in one or more areas of study within the traditional disciplines of the liberal arts through nine hours of coursework in an area of emphasis.
  - ⇒ Prepare for employment and/or for graduate study in various fields through high quality internships and educational experiences, including anthropology, political science, law, criminology, health care, the cultural sector, social services, business, non-profit management, or public history projects.
- ◇ Need for proposed program. Today's students often think in interdisciplinary terms and are interested in studying one field through multiple disciplinary lenses. There has been student interest in courses and career opportunities tied to work directly related to urgent social issues, such as human security, labor, incarceration and law enforcement, immigration, children, health care, education, and the environment. There is no specific degree program at the university that provides course work and experiential learning/internship opportunities in these areas, or which prepare students for careers in the non-profit sector. Student interest is reflected in the Justice for All living learning community. For the past two academic years, 40 students have been part of this community each year. Programming for the Justice for All living learning community is supported by GWSS.

Additional student interest in the proposed program has been demonstrated by the first-year seminar dedicated to social justice in the Honors Program (20 students in Fall 2015 and 20 students in Fall 2016); a 2015 social justice conference sponsored by GWSS that was well attended by students, faculty, staff, and community members (210); and a student seminar co-taught by GWSS faculty and faculty from the College of Law's Human Rights Center. In addition, donors at the first annual GWSS luncheon held in October 2015 in conjunction with the conference expressed interest in supporting a proposed Social Justice program. The luncheon was held to announce a new scholarship in GWSS, the Kristin K. Lippke fund, and to celebrate the accomplishments of the department's undergraduate students.

Career and internship opportunities for students in the proposed program are available in such areas as law enforcement, communications, fundraising, non-profit management, education, policy making, social services, counseling, health care, and human resources. Students are interested in programs where they can experience hands-on learning that leads to a fulfilling career.

The program of study will also provide a foundation for graduate or professional study in criminology, criminal justice, sociology, psychology, law, social work, urban planning, education, social policy, and similar areas. The proposed program will work well with other programs in such disciplines as psychology and social work and afford students a competitive advantage when applying to graduate school in forensic psychology or social work with a corrections emphasis. The GWSS department has a strong relationship with the School of Social Work's certificate in Critical Cultural Competence. The proposed program will be an alternative to social work; it can also be a second major for social work students.

In the past few years, graduate school enrollment by GWSS graduates has risen by 3.5%. The proposed program will prepare students for graduate studies. GWSS students have recently been accepted into the following graduate programs – Northern Illinois University College of Law; New Media Writing, School of the Arts Institute in Chicago; and University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work.

A recent Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey of undergraduate University of Iowa students showed that 56% participated in volunteering or community service during the academic year. During the 2015-16 academic year, there were more than 300 students enrolled in social justice-themed courses, such as Social Justice and Social Welfare; more than 260 students are enrolled in similar courses for Fall 2016.

- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The department is committed to a liberal arts education as well as to building career paths for students through practicum experiences, internships, partnerships, and coursework. Goal I of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) strategic plan is focused on student success, with a primary aim of providing “a rich and challenging undergraduate experience that develops in student the skills and understanding that contribute to rewarding person lives, satisfying and productive work, and informed participation in a diverse, multi-cultural society.” Student success is an important part of CLAS’ development of a new strategic plan and is a strategic initiative in the current draft of the University’s 2016-2021 strategic plan. The draft emphasizes the importance of high impact practices for undergraduate students, including internships, undergraduate research, and experiential-based learning courses.

The proposed program encourages students to acquire experiences and transferable skills that are useful in many professions, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary research opportunities, and real life experiences at the heart of social justice that can only be gained through high quality internships, practica, and the required capstone experience.

- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at SUJ. The proposed program is a unique academic program which will not duplicate existing programs at the university. Social Justice is an interdisciplinary and “intersectional ideal” that involves theory and practice in the areas of equity, justice, and global citizenship. The proposed program will be especially strong in GWSS because the department is composed of faculty with appointments across CLAS who teach courses for the proposed major; existing resources of many units will help support the curriculum.

One such faculty member is the Chair of the Department of Sociology, which will offer a new program in Criminology, Law and Justice to prepare students to pursue careers in criminological research, the law, policing, probation, parole, and other areas. GWSS faculty are working closely with the Sociology faculty to allow students to pursue either major or a major in one area with a minor in the other; this will strengthen the knowledge of the field from many perspective. The Center for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies complements the proposed program because it has a focus on Criminology, Law and Justice, giving students a chance to participate in some of the Center's activities for graduate students, including research.

The College of Law offers a certificate in Human Rights, as well as student conferences that involve social justice related issues. Students in the proposed program may also take courses to earn the certificate in Human Rights; they may also consider completing the university's Non-Profit management certificate offered through University College.

Students may also combine the proposed program with studies in political science, religion, anthropology, and the arts. Cross-appointed faculty in GWSS represent many areas of study at the university; the diverse faculty will help mentor students toward how to best combine programs of study.

- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. There are no programs explicitly focused on social justice or human rights in any post-secondary institution in Iowa. Many institutions offer programs in related areas that would help students to pursue such an interest with a goal of working on a global or national social issue. These majors include education, social work or human services, sociology, criminal justice, women's studies, and others that focus on inequality, differences in economic status, and global issues, such as climate changes, water purity, and pollution.

ISU offers an undergraduate program in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, called Global Resource Systems, which educates students on agriculture and international resources, preparing students to work with the development of resources or on other specific problems, such as water or food scarcity. ISU also offers a program in Child, Adult and Family Services that "provides a broad emphasis in theory, research, and application in child, adult and faculty services, including attention to community issues and public policy." ISU is known for other programs leading to careers in social justice, such as criminology, environmental stewardship, and education.

Grinnell College administers a program in Global Development Studies as an interdisciplinary concentration. Students "explore strategies for addressing global problems and development's social and environmental implications," preparing students for "hands-on work for organizations worldwide in areas, including health, poverty reduction, and human rights."

UNI's School of Applied Human Sciences offers a program in family services "to prepare professionals to work in a variety of organizations, businesses or agencies. Specializations in the school integrate aspects of science, social sciences, fine arts, business, education and economics in addressing a shared mission of equipping students with knowledge and skills that enable them to improve the lives of individuals and families, at home and in the workplace." It also offers a program in Gerontology, with two tracks. The Social Work major at UNI teaches students to recognize "the types and processes of discrimination and oppression," helping students to learn about creating "social and economic justice through advocacy and social reform."

Cornell College offers a minor in Civic Engagement to prepare students to be thoughtful and informed citizens and servant-leaders. Through diverse interdisciplinary coursework, student develop knowledge of ethical principles, political systems, and social issues, an understanding of the different layers of social action, and the skills to engage in effective social change.

- ◇ Unique features. The GWSS department provides a model of education that is interdisciplinary and that ties theory to practice. GWSS faculty focus their research on examining the meaning of equality, diversity, and justice. The department also has a tradition of providing opportunities to students to apply what they have learned to “real world” settings through an 11-week practicum experience at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women; through a department internship program; and through a senior research capstone in which students undertake an individual research project that requires extensive field research and theory and which emphasizes effective communication of findings through oral communication, public poster presentation, and a paper.
- ◇ Resources. The personnel, facilities, and equipment for the Gender, Women’s, and Sexuality Studies program will also be used to support the proposed program, with capacity in courses to serve additional students at no extra cost. Instructors in the programs will be drawn from their home departments across the College, with many of the courses cross-listed among units, which will serve future students by offering seats in multiple formats and degree programs. No new facilities or equipment will be required for the proposed program.
- ◇ Student demand. The proposed program is a response to the changing and expanding interests of students in Iowa. In the past decade, there has been an increase in students who work as volunteers, and who are interested in careers in the non-profit sector and in government. While they have found homes in traditional majors at the university, students have expressed a desire to integrate academic work more deeply with anticipated career paths, whether the student plans to work for non-profits, influence law and policy, or work in fields such as public health, education, and social services. Combining interdisciplinary coursework with real-world learning experiences also prepares students for continued education through graduate and professional studies. The proposed program is a response to this perceived need.
- ◇ Duplication. There are no programs in any Iowa institution of higher education explicitly focused on social justice or human rights. However, most post-secondary institutions in Iowa offer majors in related areas that allow students to pursue such an interest and reach a goal of working on a global or national social issue. These majors include education, social work or human services, sociology, criminal justice, women’s studies, and others that focus on inequality, differences in economic status, and global issues, such as climate changes, water purity, and pollution.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. Iowa is confronting a number of social issues that are changing the face of the state: environmental issues; issues of food and poverty in a state supplying part of the country’s food supply; an aging population; growing and diverse communities of immigrants; access to services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault; and an escalating mental health crisis. The proposed program will prepare students for employment and/or for graduate study in these areas through internships and educational experiences that teach problem solving using tools from many disciplines.

The proposed program will also prepare students for further studies in such areas as anthropology, political science, law, criminology, and health. Students will also seek employment in the social services, education, public health, business, non-profit management, or public history projects. As Spotlight on Careers points out, social justice concerns can be related to almost any field or area of employment, including education and research, law and public policy, communications and media, non-government organizations (NGOs)/nonprofits, and social work. The site lists opportunities in each area, such as careers as teachers, lawyers, and social workers, as well as in marketing, media, and administration, starting with positions as a program assistant and manager.<sup>1</sup>

Careers related to social justice include health care administration (23% growth); assisted living directors and other personnel (23% growth); marketing consultants (32% growth); environmental health and safety (15% growth), based on data collected by PayScale, “an online salary, benefits and compensation information company” that mines data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook. GWSS has also built a strong working relationships with the Pomerantz Career Center and has had discussions about creating internships and career guidance for students pursuing the Social Justice major. Recent placements of GWSS students include the Iowa City Public Library – Community and Access Services Assistant; and the United States Department of Agriculture – Scheduler.

- ◇ Consultation with representatives of other programs. The university consulted with ISU and UNI on the proposed proposal.
- ◇ Letters of support. Letters of support from the University of Northern Iowa and Iowa State University are provided in the Attachment.
- ◇ Cost. No new costs for the proposed program are anticipated for years one and two. The total costs necessary for the next three years will be covered from existing CLAS resources already allocated to the department. Additional costs will be covered by an increase in revenue of \$40,800 generated by additional credit hours. If needed, one part-time lecturer will be hired with this funding if enrollments grow beyond the expected numbers. No new costs are anticipated after year five.

		New Costs	Total Costs
Year 1	Current GWSS allocation	\$0	\$0
Year 2	Current GWSS allocation	\$0	\$0
Year 3	Possible part-time lecturer	\$35,500	\$35,500
Year 4			

- ◇ Projected enrollment. The enrollment is expected to be 25 students during year one, increasing to 110 by year seven.

<sup>1</sup> <http://spotlightoncareers.org/career/social-justice/employer-job-options/>

- ◇ Anticipated sources of students. Some students will move from other university programs or will declare this program of study as a secondary major, including those students in sociology, psychology, ethics and public policy, public health, political science, and related areas. The proposed program will appeal to students who want a vocation related to helping others, or careers in government services or the non-profit sector, but are not necessarily interested in teaching or social work. It will also appeal to those seek hands-on and experiential learning.

The department anticipates that 25 new students will be recruited for this major based on student interest in the major's content and on internship opportunities. Three of the University of Iowa's peer group universities – University of Michigan, University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Wisconsin, Madison – offer undergraduate/graduate degrees in social justice. Being part of a small group of Big Ten universities that offers a Social Justice major will place the University of Iowa in an advantageous position to attract undergraduate students interested in this area of study as well as undergraduate students interested in a highly interdisciplinary major.

- ◇ Articulation agreement. The proposed program will attract new first-year students as well as transfer students who completed an associate degree from an Iowa community college, including Eastern Iowa Community College and Kirkwood Community College. The proposed program will be suggested for the 2+2 Plan to ensure a smooth transfer of credits and completion of a baccalaureate degree.
- ◇ Off-campus delivery. The proposed program will be offered on campus.
- ◇ Accreditation. The proposed program will not apply for accreditation because it does not exist in this field.
- ◇ Opportunities for internships. The proposed program will provide opportunities on and off campus. Students will participate in interdisciplinary research opportunities, connections with scholars, and the kinds of real life experiences at the heart of social justice that can only be gained through high quality internships and practica. GWSS is prepared to offer all of these options in the proposed program.

Social Justice is an interdisciplinary and intersectional ideal that involves theory and praxis in the areas of equity, justice, and global citizenship. Consequently, the major requires a capstone experience. Students in the GWSS department are currently involved in practica, internships, and volunteer experiences in various sites, including the Department of Corrections and the Department of Community Corrections, the Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP), the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), Emma Goldman Health Care Clinic, Mecca Drug Treatment Program, the Shelter, and the Crisis Center. The department will expand these experiences to Des Moines through the John and Mary Pappajohn Education Center.

- ◇ Marketing plan. Upon approval of the proposed program, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will work with Admissions and the Office of Strategic Communication to develop a marketing plan; generally, a new major is added to the application, to all relevant materials, and web sites to inform students about the major. Additionally, campus visit days highlight new majors as do special open houses and visits with high school counselors. Admissions will plan special events for future students to attend, such as talks and research discussions. Most importantly, faculty will meet with students to discuss the major.

- ◇ Evaluation plan. Each year, every major at the university participates in campus-wide assessment of programs, with departments submitting their annual plans and steps taken for improvement to the Office of Assessment. Additionally, the College reviews new programs after the third year, asking the departmental chair or the program director to review with the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (UEPCC) the enrollments, course offerings, progress toward degree, assessment outcomes, and other details.

UEPCC makes recommendations to the College on any needed changes to the program of study. Departments are also reviewed every five years by the College and by outside reviewers who are experts in the field and, at that time, all existing majors within a department are also reviewed, with curricular offerings and requirements discussed, with changes recommended.

- ◇ Advising. Entering students with 24 or fewer semester hours will be advised at the Academic Advising Center. Students with more than 24 semester hours will be advised in the program by the advisor working with students in the GWSS major and/or the new social justice program advisor. The advisor(s) will help students select courses that focus on the students' key interests and will refer students to faculty in their areas of interest who will mentor students. The advisor will also help students stay on track toward graduation and will encourage students to connect with faculty and to seek experiential learning experiences and internships which are relevant to their capstone experience.
- ◇ Date of implementation. Creation of the proposed program will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog. The anticipated implementation date is Spring 2017.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Office of the Dean  
202 Catt Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-1301  
515 294-3220  
FAX 515 294-1303  
schmittb@iastate.edu

DATE: February 24, 2015

TO: Helena Dettmer, Associate Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa

FROM: Amy Slagell, Associate Dean   
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Iowa State University

RE: Proposed BA in Social Justice

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences supports our colleagues at the University of Iowa in their proposal for a new BA degree in Social Justice offered through the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies Department. This interdisciplinary major will allow students a major within which they can integrate their learning across a wide range of disciplines with deeper learning about the history and dynamics of social change.

Our College of Human Sciences offers a Certificate in Social Justice administered in the School of Education, so this proposal was also shared and reviewed by Human Sciences Associate Dean Linda Hagedorn and the School of Education Director, Marlene Strathe; they also joined me for our phone conversation with you about the proposal. They were interested to learn about the proposal and did not have concerns about overlap. As a graduate certificate in an education context, their social justice program is quite distinct.

Our state, our nation and our world can certainly benefit from students whose passion for social justice is supported by a rigorous academic program. We wish you success with your efforts and look forward to hearing more about the accomplishments of students who engage in this new major as a way to achieve their future goals.

Women's and Gender Studies



February 18, 2015

Dr. Helena Dettmer  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa

Dr. Dettmer:

With this letter please accept my declaration of support for the proposed Social Justice undergraduate major at the University of Iowa. The program is a timely, appropriate, and welcome offering for undergraduate students.

After discussing the details with the Senior Director of Academic Programs and Student Development, I anticipate a fruitful relationship between the UNI Women's and Gender Studies and the new UI Social Justice major as administered by the UI Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Working together on shared experiences for students will enhance both programs, and enrich student learning on both campuses by extending their scope of understanding.

Social-justice related work is increasingly important to our incoming Women's and Gender Studies students, who seek to address inequalities and make changes in their communities. Looking at issues from a WGS perspective involves sensitivity to the role gender plays in society, while a Social Justice perspective will highlight legal and institutional aspects of society can shine a light on those practices with regard to gender as well as other categories of oppression. Students of both disciplines would benefit from a knowledge of the other, as in practice they are inseparable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine A. F. MacGillivray".

Dr. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray  
Director, Women's and Gender Studies